

Department of Historic Resources

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8 NEW HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS APPROVED

RICHMOND – The Department of Historic Resources has approved for placement along Virginia roadways and public places seven new highway markers and one replacement marker highlighting aspects of the Commonwealth's history.

- “Freedmen’s Bureau, Freedman’s Bank,” in Richmond, located in Darden Garden next to Capitol Square, is sponsored by the Department of Historic Resources and the Virginia Historical Society. This marker highlights the original location of these two institutions at 10th and Broad Streets and the role the agencies played in uniting families, legalizing marriages, and providing “education, food, clothing, job placement, legal and other services to former slaves.”
- “The Courage of Frank Padget,” in Amherst County, is proposed for installation at the intersection of State Rte. 130 and U.S. Rte. 501. This marker recalls the heroism of Padget, “an enslaved boatman,” who led efforts in 1854 that cost him his life but saved dozens of canal boat passengers who were stranded after heavy rains flooded the James River and “the treacherous Balcony Falls.”
- “Ruth Brown,” in Portsmouth, the location to be determined. This marker, sponsored by the Department of Historic Resources and the Virginia Historical Society, honors Brown, “the best-selling African American female recording artist early in the 1950s” who died last year.
- “Stingray Point,” in Middlesex County, is proposed for installation on General Puller Highway in Saluda. This replacement marker with an expanded text, sponsored by the Deltaville Community Association, recalls when Capt. John Smith was made ill after being stung by a cow-nose ray while exploring the mouth of the Rappahannock River in 1608.
- “Mecklenburg County Training School,” is proposed for installation in South Hill. This marker discusses the establishment of the county’s African-American training school in 1915, which eventually burned in 1942.
- “Laura Ratcliffe,” Fairfax County, is proposed for installation near the Dulles Marriot. This marker, sponsored by the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s Laura Ratcliffe Chapter, highlights the Confederate spy activities of Fairfax native Ratcliffe.

- “Shockoe Hill Cemetery,” Richmond, will be erected near the cemetery’s entrance on East Hospital Street. This marker provides a brief history of the cemetery and highlights some of the prominent people buried there, including Chief Justice of the U.S. John Marshall.
- “Indian Treaty of 1646,” the location to be determined. Sponsored by the Department of Historic Resources and the Virginia Historical Society, this marker focuses on the treaty that was signed by “Necotowance and ratified by the Grand Assembly in October 1646.”

Three of the above markers—the Freedman’s Bureau, Ruth Brown, and the Indian Treaty of 1646—are the result of an initiative of the Department of Historic Resources, in collaboration with the Virginia Historical Society, to sponsor new highway markers that recognize the full diversity of Virginia’s rich legacy by highlighting significant events, people, and places pertaining to African-American, Indian, and women’s history in the Commonwealth.

The Virginia highway marker program, which celebrates its 80th anniversary this year, is one of the oldest in the nation. Currently there are 2,000-plus official state markers, mostly installed and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

A new edition of *A Guidebook to Virginia’s Historical Markers* is an excellent reference for locating historical markers when traveling the Commonwealth’s roads. Copies of the recently released book are available at bookstores throughout Virginia or can be ordered from University of Virginia Press or the Department of Historic Resources.

Funds for new highway markers come from private organizations, individuals, and local jurisdictions. More information about the Historical Highway Marker Program is available on the website of the Department of Historic Resources at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/>.